

The Wilderness Station's OTTER CHATTER NEWSLETTER



March, 2015

(615) 217-3017

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED TOPIC: Snapping Turtles!

Common Snapping turtles can weigh up to 45 lbs. in the wild! Its upper shell length is around 17 – 18 inches. It can live 30 – 40 years. It is known for its aggressive personality and toughness when on land. One bite from a common snapping turtle can easily snap a broom handle in two. Their bodies are much larger than their shells so they cannot retreat into the protection of their shell. This makes them feel very vulnerable and they will not hesitate to confront an enemy on land. In the water they are very shy and will swim away.

Their saw-edged tails are as long or longer than their carapace. They have a sharp, hooked upper jaw. This hard beak has a rough cutting edge that is used for tearing food. They are omnivores and will eat just about anything.

One clutch of 20 -40 eggs is laid in May or June. The female digs a shallow bowl-shaped nest in a well drained, sunny location and covers the eggs. She then leaves the eggs and hatchlings to fend for themselves. The sex of the baby turtles is determined by the incubation temperature. Eggs maintained at 68 degrees produce only females, eggs maintained at 70 – 72 degrees produce both males and females and those incubated at 73 – 75 degrees produce only males.

Snapping turtles are nocturnal and spend most of the time underwater except during breeding season.

Alligator snapping turtles are the largest North American turtle and can weigh up to 250 lbs. They have a pink, worm-like flap of skin on their tongues that will show when they open their mouths to act as a lure.

March Programs

Please call the Wilderness Station at
(615) 217-3017 to register.

Chocolate Hike: Saturday, March 7th. 2:30 p.m.

Ages 8+. \$3.00/child. **Reservation Required.**

Bird Club: Saturday, March 14th. 9:00 a.m.

Nickajack Wetlands. All Ages. Free

Earth Lab: Tuesdays-Fridays, 12-5 p.m. 4-9 year olds. Free. March Topic: Go Green.

Volunteer Orientation: Saturday, March 14th. 9 a.m.—12p.m. Ages 16+. Free. **Reservation**

Required.

Community Outreach Day: Saturday, March 21st. 10 a.m.—12 p.m. Ages 12+. Free.

Girl's Night Out: Friday, March 27th. 7-9 p.m. Ages 7-10. \$5/child. **Reservation Required.**

Weekly Programs

Wild Things: Wednesdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m. 1-4 years, with adult. \$3.00/child. **Reservations**

Required the Tuesday before class.

Tales and Trails: Wednesdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m. 4-7 years, with adult. \$3.00/child.

Reservations Required the Tuesday before class.

*To learn more about these and other programs at the

Wilderness Station, please visit our website at

www.murfreesborotn.gov/parks or check out our Facebook Page under Outdoor Murfreesboro.